

VZCZCXYZ0000  
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHAE #0604/01 2001500  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 191500Z JUL 06  
FM AMEMBASSY ASMARA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8310  
INFO RUEHKH/AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM 0115  
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 5925  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1171  
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 4599  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 1344  
RUEHUJA/AMEMBASSY ABUJA 0187  
RUEHNJ/AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA 0205  
RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA 1005  
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO 0315  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0513

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 000604

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/19/2016  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [UNSC](#) [ETTC](#) [ER](#) [SU](#)  
SUBJECT: LEAD UP TO SECOND ROUND OF EF/KHT  
NEGOTIATIONS

CLASSIFIED BY: AMB Scott H. DeLisi, for reasons 1.4  
(b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: The second round of negotiations between the Eastern Front and Government of National Unity (GNU) commenced on July 17, 2006. All sides were very positive on the prospect of reaching a quick settlement to the problems that have beset eastern Sudan. In the lead-up to the second round: the Eastern Front held a consultative meeting in Tesseney; the GNU hosted a meeting on eastern Sudan in Khartoum; and issues between the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) and the National Congress Party (NCP) which arose the weekend of July 15-16, raised doubts on whether the SPLM would take part in the negotiations. Meanwhile, the questions surrounding the role, if any, for international observers remain unresolved. Contacts here suggest that the GSE might be receptive to input on how better to involve the international community in the process. Any suggestions from the Department in this regard would be welcomed. End Summary.

#### MEETING IN TESSENEY

-----

12. (C) Leading up to the second round of negotiations the Eastern Front held a consultative meeting in Tesseney from 3-7 July. The meetings were generally viewed as a success and attracted somewhere from 1000-1500 participants from eastern Sudan, Khartoum and the Beja and Rashaida diaspora communities. When PolOff spoke with Dr. Amna Dirar, she explained that the Eastern Front elicited a range of opinions regarding the negotiations from those who attended the meeting. One of the key issues discussed was the role of observers and the international community. The representatives present felt it was imperative that there be official observers to lend credibility to the process. Dirar explained that the Eastern Front leadership still wanted observers, but were unsure how to involve them at this point.

13. (C) The consultative meetings stressed a number of other points meant to guide the Eastern Front leadership, Dirar explained. Among the most important was the call for a federal state made up of

Kassala, Gederaf and Red Sea states; a percentage of revenues being channeled back into eastern Sudan to help build infrastructure; and a focus on education in the region. Dirar explained that while the GNU was invited, they did not attend, and did not allow the tribal leaders from eastern Sudan to attend.

#### SUPPORT FROM THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

-----

¶4. (C) Following the consultative meetings in Tesseney, the Eastern Front had some meetings with and received training from a group of Norwegian advisors brought to Asmara to provide assistance to the Eastern Front - Professor Lane, Dr. Stiansen and Jana Williamson. The Norwegian Charge, however, admitted to some concerns on the usefulness of the training. Along with the Norwegian group, the European Commission has sent a political advisor on Sudan to observe the talks. The Eastern Front and GSE mediator Yemane Ghebreab have also requested that an Italian national, Sara Pantuliano based in London and working for the Institute of Development Studies, who is an expert on the Beja and eastern Sudan come to attend the talks and advise the Eastern Front, however funding has not been worked out regarding her travel and rates.

#### BASHIR SAYS "NO" TO OBSERVERS

-----

¶5. (C) PolOff also received a read-out on the GNU conference held on eastern Sudan at Freedom Hall in Khartoum on July 13. According to sources in Asmara, the meeting which was intended to run for four days only lasted one day. Overall the sense from our Sudanese contacts in Asmara was that the meeting did not achieve the results sought by the NCP. While Salva Kiir was supposed to provide the opening statement, he pulled out of the conference just before due to differences of opinion with Bashir over Darfur. Similarly, we are told that neither the UMMA Party nor the DUP sent representatives. In total only about 100 people attended. A partial translation of Bashir's statement at the conference provided by one of our contacts focused on the issue of observers in the negotiations taking place in Asmara. In the version we received, Bashir is quoted as vowing publicly to "never accept observers in negotiations on eastern Sudan. There is no room for observers."

#### KIIR CANCELS TRIP TO ASMARA

-----

¶6. (C) Rumors last week also circulated that Salva Kiir would be making a visit to Asmara on Saturday evening, July 15 to meet with the Darfur non-signatories and attempt to consolidate the Abuja process. The GSE waited until late on Saturday expecting Kiir to arrive in Asmara, only to be notified that he would not be making the visit. Rumor from Sudan contacts is that Kiir put off the trip due to problems that have arisen between the SPLM and NCP over Darfur. Primarily Kiir and the SPLM support a UN force in Darfur and have angered Bashir and the NCP. Moreover, Kiir is focused on the lifting of sanctions in southern Sudan and wants to distance himself from Bashir's intransigence on Darfur as much as possible before he visits the U.S. and meets with members of Congress.

#### SPLM ALMOST DON'T ATTEND NEGOTIATIONS...

-----

¶7. (C) While Kiir's last minute cancellation upset the GSE, news on Sunday, July 16 that the SPLM delegation might not attend the eastern Sudan

negotiations gave them new concerns. Sources claim that as of midnight on July 16, news was that the delegation might not attend the opening session on July 17 due to the issues raised above, as well as a feeling that the NCP was not interested in really solving problems in eastern Sudan. They "want to use us and the name of the movement (SPLM), but they're (NCP) not interested in serious negotiations," asserted one SPLM source. In the end Minister for Investment Malik Agar and some of the delegation did arrive the morning of July 17, however Yassir Arman stayed behind to head up the committee for the memorial of John Garang.

#### OPENING SESSION

18. (C) The opening session for the Eastern Front and GNU negotiations was held on July 17, 2006. During the opening session both the Eastern Front and GNU offered a very positive take on negotiations and possibility of a settlement in the coming weeks. The first sessions began the same evening. No agenda was shared on July 17 and nothing has been shared with the international community to date. When PolOff met with Dr. Amna Dirar last week, the tentative agenda was to address power sharing, wealth sharing and security in that order. The Norwegians, EU and others continue to camp out in the corridors of the Den-Den Club where the talks are taking place in hopes of collecting bits of information, but thus far with minimal success. Initial reports suggest that so far the talks have been primarily procedurally focused. The GSE has yet to brief the international community or establish a mechanism to include international observers in any way - formally or not.

#### OBSERVERS OR NOT?

19. (C) In speaking with contacts who advise the GSE on Sudan, the wide-spread belief here is that the GNU may have made "no observers" a precondition to the Eritreans' hosting negotiations between the Eastern Front and GNU. Those close to the Eastern Front and GSE believe that while the exclusion of observers hurts the Eastern Front more than anyone else, having anyone other than Eritrea host negotiations, would probably hurt their prospects for peace even more. So while the Eastern Front and the rest of the international community may believe it is a mistake, they point out that it could be an even bigger one if the insistence on observers results in the talks collapsing.

110. (C) As noted above, eastern Front representatives want more international actors involved in the negotiations process. Last week, regional Eastern Front offices in Kassala, Gederaf, Port Sudan and elsewhere issued statements that observers need to be involved officially and those involved on the outskirts in Asmara, also believe that the Eastern Front and GSE must make an effort to involve observers. The problem is twofold, does the international community push so hard that they sacrifice the negotiation and would we accept an informal role if it was more structured. The Eastern Front seems open to recommendations on how to better involve observers and we believe the GSE would also be willing to listen to suggestions, especially if international partners can help make a viable process a reality.

#### COMMENT

111. (C) Post will continue to engage Eastern Front

leaders in the next day or so, regarding the first few days of negotiations. Thus far, it sounds like negotiations are moving smoothly. The SPLM's concerns pose some issues for the GSE. Post believes that the GSE is very dependant on the SPLM to help leverage the NCP and, given their historical ties trusts them as a partner. If the SPLM were to leave the negotiations problems could arise not just for the GSE but for the Eastern Front. End Comment.

DELISI